

Aurora & Streetsboro Officers Honored

Officer Dan Kalk of the Aurora Police Department and Officer Stanley Siedlecki of the Streetsboro Police Department were recognized as Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Officers of the Year by the Mental Health & Recovery Board of Portage County and the Portage County Police Chiefs Association.

The officers were awarded for practicing the communication and de-escalation techniques they learned during their CIT training in dealing with individuals who are experiencing a mental health crisis or are struggling with addiction. State Senator John Eklund attended the ceremony to personally congratulate the officers and to present them with a commendation from the Ohio Senate.

Officer Kalk was nominated by a community member for his compassion and thoughtfulness and Aurora Chief Byard seconded the nomination. "Sergeant Kalk has a high level of compassion, especially for the special needs community," commented Byard. "He is an example of how law enforcement can be an effective partner in managing crisis situations."

Officer Siedlecki was nominated by Streetsboro Chief Powers. "As a road officer, Officer Siedlecki has been



Crisis Intervention Team Officers of the Year were presented with awards in November at the Mental Health & Recovery Board of Portage County meeting. Pictured from left are Streetsboro Police Chief Powers, CIT Officer of the Year Stanley Siedlecki, CIT Officer of the Year Dan Kalk, and Aurora Police Chief Byard.

excellent at talking with individuals who are either experiencing a mental crisis or those who just need some guidance," said Powers.

Siedlecki gives back to the CIT program each year by volunteering as an actor for the role plays that are used to train officers during the week-long training. He also helps the community by organizing a food drive for the local pantry.

Joel Mowrey, Ph.D., Executive Director of the Mental Health & Recovery Board of Portage County, explained that "the CIT training class provides law enforce-

ment officers with tools to safely help people in crisis and prevent arrests. Officers learn de-escalation techniques and develop a fundamental understanding of mental illness and substance use disorders. CIT emphasizes the need for the police and community professionals to work collaboratively as a team to help our residents who are in crisis."

Since 2006, more than 250 officers have completed the class in Portage County. Every law enforcement agency in the county has CIT officers. The course is supported nationwide by the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

Thank you voters!

Thank you voters of Portage County for passing the levy for the Mental Health & Recovery Board of Portage County. We appreciate your support and commitment to ensuring that Portage County will continue to provide critical and necessary mental health and substance use disorder prevention and treatment services.

We are very fortunate that the residents of our county are working together to help others in need.

Mental Health & Recovery Board
of Portage County
155 E. Main Street, Kent, OH 44240
330.673-1756



Surviving Loss by Suicide Event



Joel Mowrey, PhD, Mental Health & Recovery Board and Deirdre Svab spoke at the International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day along with members of the Portage County Suicide Prevention Coalition Michelle Furbee, Coleman Professional Services and Paul Dages, Townhall II

Every year on the Saturday before Thanksgiving, hundreds of cities across the country and around the world host International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day events, healing gatherings where family and friends who've been touched by suicide loss can come together to connect, share, and find comfort. This year in Ravenna, the Suicide Prevention Coalition of Portage County hosted the annual event that included a screening of "Life Journeys: Reclaiming Life after Loss" – a documentary that traces the grief and healing journey that follows a suicide loss over time.

After viewing the film, a group discussion was facilitated by Joel Mowrey, PhD, executive director of the Mental Health & Recovery Board of Portage County and featured guest speaker Deirdre Svab. Streetsboro resident Svab shared her story of recovery after losing her son to suicide.

"For many, attending a suicide loss day event is the first step in realizing they are not alone," said Mowrey. "It can be helpful for those who have recently lost a loved one to suicide to hear from someone who has been through the loss."

Svab shared with the group that she spent several months extremely depressed and unable to get out of bed after the loss of her son David. Since his death, Deirdre found a way in her healing journey to honor her son's life. She started "David's Ministry" which provides sandwiches and basic needs for homeless individuals in Cleveland in his memory. "David dedicated time to helping the homeless on missions during that last few years of his life," she explained. "It keeps his memory alive, serves others, and gives me a chance to talk about him."

Svab also spoke about their families' grief after losing another son, Donovan, an officer with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources and a Garrettsville Police officer, who was killed by a drunk driver.

"I am glad we hold this event every year," said Paul Dages, Chair of the Portage County Suicide Prevention Coalition. "The Coalition's goal is to increase awareness of suicide as a mental health issue, reduce stigma, and increase family support."

The Coalition holds a monthly Suicide Loss Support Group meeting on the last Wednesday of each month from 6:30 to 8:00 pm at the Mental Health & Recovery Board office located at 155 E. Main Street in Kent. Due to the holidays, the December support group will meet on Dec 21. For more, call 330-673-1756.

Opiate Conference Videos Available

Videos of the Portage County Opiate Conference held in October by the Ohio Attorney General's Office, Mental Health & Recovery Board, and Portage Health District are available to view on our YouTube Channel. Featured speakers include Health Commissioner Joseph Diorio, Dr. Brian Welsh, local leaders during the panel discussion and a recovery story.



Link to our YouTube channel through our website:

www.mental-health-recovery.org

Podcast on Recovery

Greg McNeil of Cover2Resources interviewed Dr. Brian Welsh, the Chief Medical Officer at Coleman Professional Services. Dr. Welsh describes his position as overseeing clinical protocols and procedures, as well as supervision of psychiatry procedures for all the Coleman locations. He describes the process of recovery of substance use disorder that many of his patient's experience.

Listen to the podcast at:

<https://cover2.org/ep-52-expect-going-outpatient-recovery-dr-brian-welsh-coleman-medical-health/>

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